

yoked to the chariot of antiquity. Let me not be misunderstood, however. In advocating the freedom of genius from restraints of precedent, I am not asserting its superiority to, or independence of, principles; what the laws of nature are to human existence, the true principles of art are to the efforts of genius. The artist of original powers may strike out a new path, but if he want to reach the goal of success he must know the bearings of his course and his object in taking it. Genius may overstep minute rules with advantage, but can never violate great principles with impunity.

What, then, are these fundamental principles of art, is the natural question. To enunciate them fully and definitely would require not only more space than is allowed me, but, I will frankly avow, more exact and extensive knowledge than I can lay claim to. I only assume to enforce the importance of ascertaining and observing these principles. It may be reasonably expected of me, however, to indicate and exemplify them, and this I will endeavour to do.

The province of the arts of design—the formative arts, or the fine arts, whichever they may be called—is to enrich, enliven, and elevate the mind by means of new and suggestive ideas of beauty and grandeur, of gaiety and grace, through the medium of representations of natural objects or fanciful inventions derived from the forms and colours of nature.

From this definition I would deduce three fundamental, or governing principles, which alike apply to all the formative arts:—

1st. That all art is only a medium for the expression of ideas tending to delight and purify the mind.

2nd. That art, being the silent utterance of ideas of beauty and grace, of grandeur or gaiety, in visible shapes, whatever is ugly without being enlivening, or repulsive without being sublime, is alien to it.

3rd. That art, being only a medium for the expression of ideas, deceptive imitation is foreign to its purpose, because in illusion the attention is necessarily diverted from the ideas that ought to be conveyed to the trick of deception.

To the author of that eloquent and original work on "Modern Painters," the graduate of Oxford, we are indebted for the enunciation and enforcement of these principles. The distinction between imitation and representation has been too often lost sight of. The notion yet prevails very extensively that painting and sculpture are merely imitative arts; but to prove that they are not so would occupy too much time. I will only observe, that if they be merely imitative, then wax-work is superior to either, and the models of Madame Tussaud are greater works of art than the sculptures of Michelangelo, or the paintings of Titian. The nearer the imitation of the substance and surface of living realities in shape, colour, and texture, the more strongly is felt the absence of those essential attributes of life—breath and motion. Hence the ghastly effect of wax models; the deception first shocks the sense, and then becomes ludicrous. Besides being amenable to these general principles, each branch of art also has its peculiar limitations and functions,—consequently its particular governing principles. Their observance, so far from being a restraint to genius, is a means of strengthening its powers.

In architecture, the science of construction enters so largely into consideration, that the art of design forms but a part, though a conspicuous and essential part, of the architect's studies. And when it is considered that a great building lasts for ages, and is not easily removed or remodelled; that an ugly edifice is a perpetual eye-sore, and a handsome one a continual delight,—the elevation of a structure becomes a matter of public concern. Even the fragment of a noble design is a beautiful object; and the façade of the Banqueting-house, Whitehall, is one of the finest of the few fine works of art in the metropolis. Leigh Hunt has felicitously characterized it as "a piece of the very music of Inigo's art—the harmony of proportion." What the city of London owes to Wren, none know so well as those who have to pass their days within its dingy precincts; and since this has become my own lot, I have learnt to venerate

the name of Wren, and feel grateful for the relief which the dome of St. Paul's, and the spires of the churches in Cheapside and Cornhill, afford to the dreary monotony of the street perspective.

Justness of proportion is so universally acknowledged to be the main feature of beauty in architecture, that however rarely it may be attained, it is not in much danger of being neglected. The necessity of designing a building so as that the elevation may convey an idea of its uses, and that the exterior may accord with the character of the interior, does not appear to be so generally recognized. Where utility is the basis of elegance, as in architectural and ornamental design, fitness is obviously an important element of beauty; but when we have a museum with the façade of a mausoleum, and a picture gallery and a college fashioned according to the same recipe, with useless porticoes and superfluous cupolas, it becomes needful to call attention to this principle. The importance of projection, both in plan and details, is also paramount, when it is considered that on this depends the effect of the sky outline, and those effects of light and shadow which are the painting of architecture. The buildings in the metropolis, from the commonest street to the last new palace, look as if they had been pared down by the abhorred shears of some demon of bad taste. The Gothic style, which not only admits of, but requires strong projections and deep recesses to give due effect to its picturesque capabilities, is too often reduced to tame, thin, colourless monotony, with walls seemingly thin as pasteboard, and ornaments as flat as flagstone. The defect of that superb and costly structure, the Palace of Parliament, is its flat and monotonous façade.

The discussion of styles of architecture involves too many considerations to be entered into here; but it may be well to observe, that in the choice of style, the site, as well as the use of the building, should be taken into account, and that the imitation of any building, however grand or beautiful, is unworthy of a great architect, and a solecism in taste. The attempt to emulate the majestic simplicity and beauty of Grecian temples, where the vast masses of polished marble rise in lustrous purity against brilliant blue skies, in edifices of brick and stucco, or of sandstone or iron, soon to be blackened by the coal smoke and moisture of our dense atmosphere, is so futile, that had due regard been paid to the first principles of art, and the very rudiments of taste, such flagrant absurdities would never have been perpetrated. The colossal and costly folly that disfigures the grandest and most picturesque city in the kingdom, and makes Edinburgh a very modern Athens indeed, is an *argumentum ad absurdum* on this point. We may excuse tasteful churchwardens, who degrade an Athenian choragic monument to the office of a parish pump, with the additions of a spout like the snout of a rhinoceros, and a handle like a pigtail; but when we see Grecian pediments and Corinthian columns crowned with red chimney-pots, intermingled with zinc smoke-funnels in hideous variety, the reproach and ridicule must fall upon those from whom better things might have been expected. If the Greeks had been a fire-side people, their chimney-stacks would have been so elegant in design, that we should probably have converted them to colonnades, and perhaps have lined Regent-street or faced the Museum with attic chimneys instead of Doric columns.

Our architecture is as yet imitative, not original; and when ancient styles are adapted to modern uses, it is rarely in the spirit of the ancients. The Greeks rendered use subservient to ornament; the flower of beauty blossomed from the stem of utility. So it should ever be. True, the Greeks imitated some of the forms and characteristics of wooden structures in marble edifices; but they did this with such consummate skill and grand effect, that it is impossible to object to the result; though, like the painting and gilding of statues, it was a relic of barbarism. The Greeks erred magnificently; but do not let us moderns perpetuate their errors, or caricature their beauties. Principle before precedent always.

We use a new material for building,—iron, which ought to have given a distinct character to the design of our architecture, as it has done

in part to its construction. Yet we see marble columns and stone arches imitated in cast iron, instead of displaying light shafts of slender columns supporting parabolic arches of wide span. Iron roofs can now be suspended over a vast area, almost as simply as the awnings which covered the amphitheatres of old, yet this does not visibly affect our edifices. We erect Gothic spires in iron, 'tis true, but it is only imitative of stonework; and carving, admirable in stone, becomes mere mechanical work when cast in metal. An ingenious inventor lately devised a scheme of metallurgic architecture, in which new effects of light and shade externally, and of interior ornament, were to be produced, and some material improvements in construction were suggested. This was a bold step in the right direction, though, as yet, nothing has been done to test the value of it.

In sculpture, the due observance of right principles is of the greatest importance. The sculptor's aim is to represent life in rigid and monotonous substances—marble, metal, wood, or plaster. To imitate the appearances of living flesh and blood is impossible; though the effect of animation on the aspect of living men and animals can be represented vividly, by means of forms carved in relief. But in aiming at imitation of the colours of life, by painting a statue, the result is a gigantic toy; indeed, there are one or two equestrian statues in this metropolis which exemplify the toyman's craft without the aid of paint, as may be seen in Cockspur-street and at Hyde-park-corner. The main points on which the sculptor has to rely being the outline of the mass—which in a detached group or figure varies with every change of the point of view—and the effect of light and shadow on the surface, the importance of a well-studied design, in which the effect of the whole shall be considered on every side, becomes evident; the *ensemble* should be expressive of character and suggestive of life, whether viewed near or from a distance. The Wellington statue, seen from Cumberland-gate, certainly conveys no idea whatever of heroic grandeur and dignity; it is more suggestive of a peasant on his mule or a costermonger on his donkey, than the hero of a hundred fights on his charger. Nor is it expressive of life on a nearer view; the horse appears a hollow thing of metal, the legs look like tubes, the cloak seems not to cover a human figure, and the cocked hat, with its plume of clinging feathers, is an extinguisher of any life there may have been in the head. Colossal in actual size, it does not seem grand, because the eye is distracted by paltry details; it is a huge heap of lifeless littleness. Chantrey's statue of Pitt, in Hanover-square, is one of the best examples of character in physiognomy strikingly expressed in sculptural style. No sculptor of modern times has equalled Chantrey in the happy art of giving living intelligence to the eye, and in expressing physiognomic characteristics with delicacy and dignity: his busts seem to think. And this is attributable to the skill with which he observed the principles of his art in the modelling of his forms as well as in the design of the mass: he cast the strongest and sharpest shadows of the face from the brow, but so as that the play of light and shade should give intelligence and vivacity to the eyes. We never find in his busts blank, sightless eyeballs, nor is our attention diverted from the brow to the lower parts of the face by the strong shadows of dilated nostrils or parted lips, as is often the case in sculpture; and the fleshy character of his modelling is inimitable. His statues of Horner and Watt, in Westminster Abbey, are fine examples of the excellence of Chantrey as a sculptor.

The statue of Voltaire, by Houdon, in the vestibule of the Theatre Français, at Paris, might be cited as a wonderful example of the representation of mobility of feature and vivacity of expression. That of Newton, by Ronbillac, in the chapel of Trinity College, Cambridge, is remarkable for its animated air; though there is too much flutter of drapery, and the *pose* of the figure is better suited to a professor of legerdemain than a philosopher. Ronbillac himself recognised the prevalent defect of littleness and want of mass in his figures, when, after revisiting Italy and seeing the antique sculptures there, he exclaimed,